

It is hard to distinguish which parts of the Botanical Society's trips are the most enjoyable. Is the mix of people, the conversations travelling to and fro, or the botanising? Probably it's the combination, which was certainly the case on the weekend trip to Nugget Point in October last year. This was the second trip in two consecutive years to Nugget Point, which hopefully may have set a precedent. Like the previous trip, it was superbly led by John Barkla who was ably assisted by his family, some of whom kept some of us very much on our toes!

The botanising began at McLean Falls where within a few metres of the cars one of the botanical highlights, *Pittosporum obcordatum* with a very colourful juvenile specimen, was found growing next to the track. Other species in the bush margin were *Coprosma decurva*, *C. rotundifolia*, *C. wallii*, *Olearia ilicifolia* and *Melicytus flexuosus* which grows well in frosty riparian areas.

Heading into the bush of note were large swards of the Umbrella fern, *Gleichenia cunninghamii*, a magnificently huge *Dicksonia fibrosa*, *Cyathea smithii*, and the very stunning Prince of Wales Feathers fern, *Leptopteris superba*. Crookes and Dobbie in 'New Zealand Ferns' (1963), p.20 were also much impressed by this fern and their description is worth reading!

With a bit of fancy footwork, we climbed onto the rocks surrounding the edge of upper pool below the main fall. At the lip high above us, where the water poured over the edge, a large *Metrosideros umbellata* was magnificently silhouetted against the sky. On the rocks at our feet species of *Hydrocotyle*, *Acaena*, *Epilobium*, *Oxalis*, *Lagenifera* and fruiting *Pratia angulata* were found.

Semantics often take centre stage on these trips (as does food). After a voluble epicurean feast; definition 'to mangegiferate', a term kindly explained to us by a visitor from Wales as eating and talking at the same time, we headed to the significant wetland area of the Tautuku Estuary. Flowering *Pittosporum tenuifolium* and *P. eugenoides* marked the beginning of an extensive estuarine boardwalk. Our first wetland was a large still body of water to which one observer was heard to describe as an ephemeral wetland because, "Still bodies of water were always ephemeral". But perhaps it belongs to another wetland class. Though a still body of water, its depth and the fact that it looked like it has 'standing water for most of the time', would indicate a less transitory nature. I think it fits better with the classification of 'shallow water' as described in the recently published '*Wetland Types In New Zealand*' by Peter Johnson and Philippe Gerbeaux (2004).

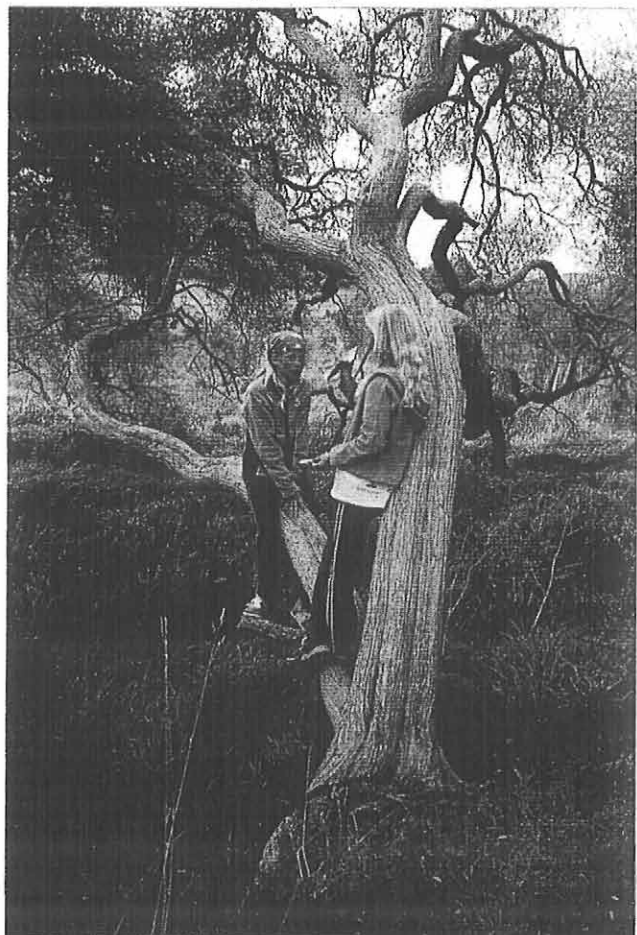
The boardwalk took us deep into the estuary giving access to areas previously inaccessible by foot. The views of the estuary from this point were stunning. The backdrop of bush covered coastal hills contrasted well with the gentle brown colours of great swathes of *Apodasmia similis* (endemic jointed rush) in the foreground. *A. similis* provided perfect shelter to the brilliantly camouflaged but very shy fern bird which rewarded our patience by making several, albeit brief, appearances.

In several groups the next morning we botanised the immediate vicinity around the Nugget Point lighthouse. As with other species the *Olearia fragrantissima* was late flowering and we were deprived of its wonderful scent. Memorable was a large remnant of original forest cover, a very large and severely wind topiaried specimen of Rimu 'horizontalis'. It had a tenuous, but obviously successful foothold in a damp spot and despite its prostrate form, seemed quite healthy. The unusually close proximity of its foliage to the ground was providing excellent shelter to local penguins, not many of which can lay claim to a *Dacrydium cupressinum* foliage rooftop!

Having read about the discovery of several specimens of one of our most endangered species, *Olearia hectorii* the deciduous tree daisy, in the ODT in 1997 it was reassuring to visit the site of some good specimens of this lovely tree, on the way home. Here the Department of Conservation is working to secure these specimens, which were once widespread in this area. *Olearia hectorii* is one of our largest small leaved trees reaching a height of nine and half metres on maturity and a close relation of the North Island *O. gardnerii*. They are truly magnificent and we were fortunate to see them in flower. Looking across the valley, their distinctive colouring and form stood out clearly tracing the edge of the river as it wound its way through the alluvial plain.

Kirsten & Rebecca Barkla
on *Olearia hectorii*.
Owaka Valley,
October 2004.
- Moira Parker

(See BSO website
for more images
of the Nugget
Point – Catlins trip)



Thought to be hundred to hundred and fifty years old, there are about thirteen specimens remaining in the area.

In 2000 a local farmer allowed a riparian strip with several good specimens, together with other structural elements of alluvial river systems, *Plagianthus regius* and *Hoheria angustifolia*, to be fenced off. This enabled DoC to establish an experimental site to return these structural elements back into this particular alluvial river system. *O. hectorii* seed has been collected and successfully germinated; it germinates easily! The seedlings are fast growing but the challenge in establishing the juvenile plants comes from introduced grass species. When grass cover under the mature trees has been kept clear, natural regeneration has occurred. Possum control at this site has benefited the mistletoe, *Tupeia antarctica*, which has established on an old *Olearia* host. The main threat to the natural regeneration of *O. hectorii* in this area would appear to be the density and vigour of introduced grass species.

It was a high botanical note to end a wonderful weekend of botanising. Many thanks to John Barkla and his family for organising and leading the trip. We all enjoyed it immensely.

Lichens, Nugget Point Trip, 16–17 Oct, 2004 Allison Knight & Jennifer Bannister

Nugget Point Lichens	Nugget Point ctd.
<i>Baeomyces heteromorphus</i>	<i>Stereocaulon ramulosum</i>
<i>Caloplaca circumluta</i>	<i>Teloschistes velifer</i>
<i>Caloplaca cf. litoralis</i>	<i>Trapelia</i> sp.
<i>Cladonia</i> sp	<i>Usnea inermis</i>
<i>Collema</i> sp	<i>Usnea</i> spp
<i>Diploschistes scruposus</i>	<i>Verrucaria microsporoides</i>
<i>Flavoparmelia haywardiorum</i>	<i>Xanthoparmelia pustuliza</i>
<i>Lecanora dispersa</i>	<i>Xanthoparmelia scabrosa</i>
<i>Lecanora</i> spp	<i>Xanthoria ligulata</i>
<i>Lecanora</i> sp	
<i>Neofuscelia verisidiosa</i>	McLean Falls
<i>Ochrolechia parella</i>	<i>Usnea capillacea</i>
<i>Parmelia sulcata</i>	<i>Usnea oncodes</i>
<i>Parmelina labrosa</i>	<i>Usnea</i> spp
<i>Parmotrema chinense</i>	
<i>Peltigera</i> sp.	Lake Wilkie
<i>Pertusaria graphica</i>	<i>Baeomyces herteromorphus</i>
<i>Pertusaria obvelata</i>	<i>Pertusaria sorodes</i>
<i>Physcia nubila</i>	<i>Cladia schizopora</i>
<i>Placopsis gelida</i>	
<i>Pseudocyphellaria crocata</i>	Owaka Valley
<i>Rhizocarpon reductum</i>	<i>Leptogium menziesii</i>
<i>Rinodina subtubulata</i>	<i>Teloschistes chrysophthalmus</i>
<i>Rinodina thiomela</i>	<i>Xanthoria parietina</i>